The Interceptor's Challenge

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Summary: The Interceptor corners Simba... and he's asking for help?

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: A Shocking Resurrection

AN: Yes, I'm back again. When I'm incredible enthusiastic, I often update this quickly. Just the way I work. Still, if *you're* pleased to read more stories, then I'm pleased to *write* them. I'm sure you're all looking forward to the return of the Interceptor. But it's not just him who's coming back...

The Interceptor's Challenge

Chapter One: A Shocking Resurrection

There were many rumours among the other kingdoms concerning what had happened to the Pride Lands. In the blink of an eye, it seemed to have been completely destroyed. Both lions and lionesses had argued since about what had actually occurred to cause its destruction. Some said that a kind of horrible storm had swooped in and eradicated the kingdom. Others said that a powerful magical lion had used his evil magic to blow up the vast and wonderful space. Another theory was that the Great Kings of the Past had decided that the kingdom had finally had its time—and thus they destroyed it.

Animals had since came and gone by to investigate the crater where the kingdom once stood, hoping that there might be some clues—or even answers—that would tell them why the Pride Lands had been annihilated in an instant. It was said to be one of the greatest and most confusing mysteries in the world…

And then, of course, there was the matter of the body.

It was a curious thing, and many lions didn't know what to make of it. It seemed… wrong. Alien. Almost forbidden. But it was there. And they couldn't ignore it. No matter how hard they wished for it to disappear. It always stayed the same.

Most other prides referred to the body as the Abomination. It had been found by a group of lions right at the edge of the Pride Lands' wreckage. Amongst all the charred rocks and smouldering boulders, the Abomination was the only thing that remained of—or resembled—a life.

First of all, it had started off as what could barely be called a scarce remnant. But then it was only a bone—and a very small one at that. The tiniest bone that no one had even noticed. It had to have come from the Pride Lands, though. The speculators were sure of that.

Upon discovering it, they left it there, as the only reminder that a great kingdom had once stood in front of it. A memorial of sorts. A single bone to represent King Mufasa's well-ruled lands.

But then the bone started growing. It got bigger, and bigger, and bigger. In fact, it seemed that more bones were forming into existence around it. As other animals watched and waited in the nearby area, they discovered that—before long—the bones had come together to make up a skeleton.

The skeleton of a cub.

As the days went on—and more and more interest grew—the skeleton began to develop even further. Gory fragments of raw flesh and organs appeared on the bones, slowly beginning to cover them.

It didn't take everyone long to figure out that the Abomination was a growing body.

As the skeleton was completely covered in bloody organs and muscles, its face slowly began to take an ugly deformed shape. Small little eyeballs sprouted from the face, as did a tongue and sharp teeth.

That was when the eyes first opened.

That was when the Abomination came to life.

And it was screaming.

The scream. A howl of true pain and utter agony. It never stopped. The Abomination just kept on screaming for hours and hours and hours. Every single second of every single minute of every single day. Just screaming.

Soon enough, the animals in the nearby vicinity couldn't take much more, and soon fled from the area. It was quite clear to them that whatever was going on by the grave of the Pride Lands, it wasn't right. The Great Kings of the Past had clearly made a grave error in allowing this demon to spawn into existence. But no matter how much they prayed, the screaming never ended.

Eventually, the Abomination was left alone to its own devices. It continued to scream and wail as its body slowly began to retake its proper shape.

But it would be many hours of agony before it finally returned to full form…

"Oh, come on, Mjanja," Tuhuma said, rolling his eyes. "How many times are you gonna talk about this?"

"I'm telling the truth, Tuhuma," Mjanja insisted. "There's something going on near where the Pride Lands were. I'm sure of it."

Tuhuma was a very suspicious cub, and he was never the first to agree with his friend Mjanja. But she was sneaky, usually making him participate in her adventures one way or another. He sometimes wondered why he didn't just leave her alone to do her own thing.

"I've said it before and I'll say it again," Tuhuma told her, sitting himself down on a large rock. He looked around the jungle surroundings, wondering how long it would be before his parents started to worry about him. The sun was already beginning to set… Why did Mjanja always have to make him come out so late? "Just because the Pride Lands are gone doesn't mean there's something weird happening."

"How can you be so narrow-minded?" asked Mjanja. "You're just scared that you might get hurt. You're not a chicken, are you?"

"No," Tuhuma said. "I'm just smart enough to know when I hear something that makes no sense—like some sort of odd demon inhabiting the area around the Pride Lands. It just sounds a little bit… well, silly, doesn't it?"

"I don't think so," said Mjanja. "Haven't you heard all of the rumours floating around the place? All the animals are talking about it!"

"Yes—crackpot theories with no evidence," Tuhuma retorted. "Face it, Mjanja: you've just been talking to some local crazies. I sometimes doubt whether you're smart yourself." He looked up in thought for a moment. "Probably not."

"You're just a little chicken," Mjanja taunted, strutting around the place, clucking like a chicken. "*Cheep—cheep—cheep…*"

"Oh, yes," Tuhuma agreed sarcastically, rolling his eyes. "I'm just *so* scared of the fictional demon that haunts the Pride Lands. Please save me, Mjanja."

"Don't be so mean," Mjanja said, shooting him an angry stare. "If you didn't want to come, then why did you say yes when I asked you, hmm?"

"I feel it's my duty to look after you," Tuhuma said, "and to make sure you don't get yourself killed."

"But I thought there was no danger?" Mjanja replied.

"I'm not talking about your stupid story," Tuhuma said. "You're a pretty clumsy cub. You might just walk off a cliff without even realising and splatter into a million pieces. Your parents wouldn't want that, would they?"

"Oh, let's just go," Mjanja said, tugging Tuhuma along with him. "I just want one quick look around the wreckage to see if it's true. Rumour has it you can hear the screaming for miles and miles around!"

"Well, the Pride Lands are *less* than a mile away," Tuhuma informed her, "and I still don't hear any screaming. That just proves my theory that this is absolutely ridiculous."

"You'll think up *any* excuse to turn around and go back, won't you?" Mjanja shot over her shoulder, keeping a steady pace as they walked through the jungle.

"I don't know," Tuhuma said, looking up at the sky. "It's getting pretty late. Our parents are gonna be pretty worried about us…"

"They'll be all right for an hour or two," Mjanja said. "We'll just say we got lost or something and it took us a little while to find our way back. That way we won't get grounded or anything."

The two cubs reached the end of the trees, which opened out onto a dry sparse of land that was dotted with a few green bushes here and there. But that wasn't the most amazing thing about the landscape.

"Whoa…" Mjanja gasped, her eyes wide as she stared at the massive sight.

The ground suddenly seemed to end, giving way to a massive crater in the earth that seemed to go on for miles and miles and miles. A pure pit of… nothing. As if it went down right into the centre of the earth.

This was where the Pride Lands once stood.

"There," Tuhuma concluded, turning around. "There's nothing here—so let's just go."

"Hey, wait a sec," Mjanja said, pulling him back. "I just want to have a little walk around the edge first."

"We have to go home," Tuhuma stressed. "There's nothing around here, Mjanja. You know there isn't."

"I know there's something here," Mjanja said, determined. "And we're going to find it."

Tuhuma sighed, seeing that Mjanja clearly wasn't going to be deterred. He was going to be stuck here for hours, searching for a demon that didn't exist. This was going to be a *long* night…

Mjanja walked around the edge of the giant hole in the earth, keeping a close eye out for anything interesting. She came to a stop at two large rocks right by the edge of the neverending void. She gasped in surprise. "Tuhuma—come and look at this!"

Tuhuma sighed, padding over to her. "What is it? If you're just going to lie and say you've found something, then— *Oh, my word!*"

The two were staring down at a body lying directly between the two stones. It seemed to be a cub.

"How did *he* get here?" Mjanja asked, looking around. "This isn't exactly the best place to take a nap…"

"Maybe we should just leave him alone," Tuhuma said suspiciously, taking a cautious step backwards. He didn't like the look of this. "I don't think it's really safe to be around strangers…"

"Don't be so silly," Mjanja said. "He's only sleeping. Probably lost. Maybe an outcast. Come to think of it, they said that the demon was hidden between two big stones… What a funny coincidence."

"Mjanja, I think you should—"

But before Tuhuma could finish his sentence, an electrical bolt zapped right into the air, knocking Mjanja clean onto her back. She screamed in surprise as the cub rose from the stones, a look of pure venom in his eyes.

"In… In… In…" said the cub, looking frantically around the area, as if this was all completely new to him. He clicked his tongue; it looked as though he was struggling to form proper words. "In… In… In…"

Tuhuma stared at the cub, eyes boggling. The entire outline of his body was crackling with pure electricity. "What *are* you?"

The cub's eyes locked onto Mjanja, who was still lying on the ground. He raised one of his forepaws. A bolt of electricity shot out and struck her in the chest. She was dead before she hit the ground. The cub then immediately turned his attention to Tuhuma.

Tuhuma backed away slowly, terrified. "Oh, no. No… please—"

The cub fired another bolt at Tuhuma, and he too was killed in an instant.

The cub moved his head around, hearing the satisfying—yet sickening—sound of his bones cracking back into place.

"In… In… In…" He took a deep breath, and then spoke the word he was trying to say.

"Interceptor."

The cub grinned, pleased that his voice was now back to normal.

"I want… *the Interceptor*."

He shot his forepaws upwards, sending arcs of electricity rippling through the air in a frantic frenzy. The cub laughed evilly, relieved to be finally back in the world of the living.

Shocker was reborn.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: On the Hunt

Chapter Two: On the Hunt

Haiba whistled merrily to himself as he sat in front of a bush, raking his claws across it and causing small fragments of leaf to flutter onto the ground.

"Haiba, are you still trimming that bush?" Nala asked, walking past him. "You've been doing it for five hours now."

"I never knew this gardening thing could be so therapeutic," Haiba said, smiling at her. "It certainly takes the boredom away. Plus it stops me from missing the kiss of a cute cub. Of course, you could kiss me right now—if you wanted."

"No, thanks," Nala replied. "I'd rather kiss a frog."

"But it would turn into a handsome prince," Haiba said. "And I might just *be* that handsome prince, Nala. Who says I *wasn't* a frog before you met me? Besides… you know you want to. And no one will ever know…"

"Haiba, go back to trimming that bush," Nala said, walking away before he could flirt with her anymore. "Maybe one day you'll learn that kissing and hugging other cubs isn't all there is to life."

"I'm not that shallow," Haiba shouted after her. "I'll kiss trees and rivers, too!" He checked to make sure no one was looking, then stroked the bush gently. "There, there, little baby," he said softly to it. "No one has to know about our relationship… It can be a secret love. That's kind of hot."

No one saw Haiba as he began to make out with the bush…

"Okay, so the wizard count is at a big fat zero," Nala sighed as she joined Simba by the river. "Although on the bright side, you've been looking a lot happier these past few days. What the heck happened to make you jump and skip around like that?"

"I had a good night's sleep," Simba lied, smiling warmly at her.

He neglected to tell her that he had finally gotten rid of his living dark side: the King of Dreams. The sneaky villain had attempted to kill Simba's soul using a dream world so he could inhabit his body. However, Simba managed to work out the solution to the problem, and now the King of Dreams was no more. Of course, that wasn't to say Simba didn't have a dark side. He was just in full control of it now…

"Well, that's… good to hear," Nala said. "Especially considering you were shouting about the King of Dreams just before Haiba knocked you out. I was beginning to think you'd lost your mind or something."

I nearly did, Simba thought, thinking back to how the King of Dreams had almost destroyed both his mind and spirit by killing Zazu and turning his remaining friends against him. "Nala, I'm as sane as Haiba."

"Not very sane, then," Nala retorted with a smile.

"No," Simba said. "I guess not. Anyway, I'm feeling pretty good about today. The sun is shining and the birds are singing. The perfect day to find a wizard. I'm sure of it."

"But we've asked everywhere," Nala said. "No one knows of any wizards around these parts."

Maybe we should have gone with Haiba's plan, then, Simba thought to himself. Haiba had suggested something unthinkable: that they resurrect their arch enemy Hago from the dead. It sounded insane—but then no one else knew anything about magic. Except for Tama, but she was hardly in control of her magic. You couldn't exactly call her a proper wizard.

"We could always ask someone *other* than a wizard," Nala suggested. "You know—if they know anything about that spell surrounding the Pride Lands. Maybe the Hermit of Hekima was wrong about wizards… they might not know anything at all about it."

"I don't suppose there's any harm in asking," Simba agreed, "but then who else would know anything about magic?"

The mouse scuttled across the ground, darting under low branches and hopping over little rocks. It was running faster than a normal mouse would, which other animals who were watching might find quite odd.

But then the mouse was being chased, after all.

"That's right. Run," said the Interceptor, perched carefully on a rock as he watched the mouse make an attempt to evade him. He was hungry for some breakfast. A hunt for a mouse—which he would then eat—was his idea of a perfect morning! "Run, you little mite."

The Interceptor let out an eagle-like screech and pounced from the rock, rolling across the ground and reaching out with his claws in an attempt to catch the mouse. But it just evaded him, sprinting away into the depth s of the jungle.

Chuckling, the Interceptor resumed his chase. "*I like it!*" he yelled, running after the mouse with his incredible speed skills. He could run for almost an hour without pausing for breath; this certainly helped with his job. After all, that was what he did. He chased down lions and killed them. It wasn't anything personal, of course; just the nature of his work.

But that wasn't to say that he didn't enjoy it.

"Come here, little mousey…" the Interceptor whispered, eyes glinting with excitement at the thought of catching his prey. "You know you can't run for ever."

The Interceptor sprinted even faster, catching up with the mouse in just a matter of seconds. He leapt high into the air once more, claws outstretched, knowing that his breakfast would soon be in his stomach…

But then something collided with his left side, sending him tumbling and bouncing across the ground into a nearby bush. He grunted in anger, ready to slash whoever had interrupted his hunt right across the throat…

That was, of course, until he noticed that Shocker was stood right in front of him.

"Hello, Interceptor," Shocker said, paws crackling with his trademark electrical powers. His eyes seemed to glow with fury. "*Long time, no see.*"

"Shocker," the Interceptor gasped, visibly shocked. "You're looking remarkably… *alive*."

"Yes," said Shocker. "I will admit that I didn't expect it. I assumed that the lava you threw me into would destroy me for ever. I didn't think that my powers of immortality would stretch that far. But I was wrong. My body slowly began to reform itself over time. My bones and organs and skin slowly began to take shape. It was an excruciatingly painful process, but well worth the wait."

Shocker snarled at the Interceptor. "For so long, I have concentrated my efforts on destroying Simba, Nala and Haiba. But now I have a much better target." He pointed squarely at him with a sharp claw. "*You*."

"You can't kill me," the Interceptor proclaimed. "I'm invincible."

"No, Interceptor," said Shocker. "*I'm* invincible. You can't kill me. No matter how many times you try. I can't die. *Ever*."

"I don't have time for this," the Interceptor said, brushing past Shocker and trying to walk away from him.

A blast of lightning obliterated a branch dangling from a nearby tree, splintering into tiny fragments that rained down on the Interceptor's head. He growled, turning around to face Shocker. "You're going to regret messing with me, you little runt!"

"The only regrets today will be from *you*," Shocker retorted, firing more bolts in the Interceptor's direction.

The Interceptor jumped to the side and started running as the deadly bolts exploded all around him. Shocker's powers seemed stronger than ever. It was quite clear that he meant business. He wanted revenge.

"Don't think you can get away from me, Interceptor!" Shocker roared, releasing more sizzling bolts of death into the air. Trees were exploding and burning all around—he was tearing this section of the jungle to pieces! "I'll find you—and I will destroy you! For once, *you're* the one who's going to be intercepted! *I like it!*"

"You are *crazy*!" the Interceptor yelled, as he tried to evade Shocker to the best of his abilities. He was a fast runner, so escaping his evil powers wouldn't be too difficult. But then the matter of stopping his rampage for good was something else entirely…

Shocker gave chase. He was so mad that even his eyes were sparking with electricity. "*Surrender yourself, Interceptor! No one will escape me!*"

The Interceptor thought of a plan, and he thought of it fast. It was quite an outlandish idea, but by this point he just didn't

care. It seemed like the only decent way to make sure that Shocker was stopped once and for all.

I need help, he thought.

"All is silent in the jungle," Ugaidi said, looking as scared as ever. "They are coming. Coming for us."

"Ugaidi, we're not in danger," Nala said, staring at him as he hid in some bushes. "If there were any 'creatures' lurking around, then I think they would have attacked us by now, don't you?"

Ugaidi shook his head. "No. Not creatures. The one who intercepts. He is coming for us. Coming to hunt us down."

"Who's he talking about?" Simba asked curiously, joining Nala by her side.

"Something about someone coming for us," Nala said. "Someone who intercepts—"

Simba yelped in surprise as he was pounced on by the Interceptor. The two of them slid across the ground, before coming to a halt at the base of a tree.

Ugaidi screamed in horror, pointing at the Interceptor. "He is here! To intercept us!"

Simba screamed as the dastardly villain came into focus. "The Interceptor? What the heck are *you* doing here?"

"You're here!" The Interceptor sounded relieved to say that. "Oh, *I like it!*"

"Please tell me what's going on," Nala said, looking confused beyond belief.

"Simba," the Interceptor said. "I need your help."

AN: You can fan-squeal now that Shocker has returned. You didn't think he wouldn't come back to have his revenge on the Interceptor, did you? Of course not! That cub *lives* for revenge! So much so that the Interceptor is asking for help! This story is getting exciting, isn't it? Hopefully I can see you soon with two more chapters. Until then, take care!

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Intercepting the Interceptor

AN: A lot of you are surprised by Shocker's return. I just love giving you all a good shock every now and again. It just makes the story so much more electrifying. Did I mention I'm not going to make any more shocking puns?

Greg M 94: I'm not sure about your favourite Interceptor line. We'll see.

Haradion: Ugaidi is a strange cub... but we won't find more about him until much later on.

Chapter Three: Intercepting the Interceptor

"*Help*?" Simba exclaimed. That was one word that he thought the Interceptor would never say. Not in a million years. It just wasn't his nature. After all, the Interceptor hated them all… *didn't* he? "What do you mean, help?"

"You *know* what I mean!" the Interceptor snapped, shaking Simba frantically by the shoulders. "Help! Assistance! Support!" He looked almost frightened. Now that *definitely* wasn't like him. Just what was going on here?

Simba shook his head, wearily climbing to his paws. "Help… assistance… support… right. Whatever. Now, tell me what the problem is."

"You're not actually going along with this, are you?" Nala asked, joining Simba by his side. She knew not to trust the Interceptor. He was the slyest of all the villains… It certainly explained how he had managed to survive up until this point. "It's obvious that it's some kind of trap."

"Why would I want to trap you, you stupid girl?" the Interceptor asked. "I don't want anything to do with you. You're history." He shrugged. "Or, maybe—I don't know—you *do* want me to come after you. Is that what you want?" He raised his forepaws, claws extended, shrieking in Nala's face. "*Do you want a piece of the Interceptor?*"

Simba stood in front of Nala, pushing the Interceptor away. "Nala, calm down. I think he's telling the truth."

"Simba, you *can't* be serious," Nala told him. "This is the maniac who tried to kill us, like, ten times!"

"It was four," the Interceptor corrected her.

"Shut up!" Nala yelled at him. "Simba, you know that he's up to no good. This is all part of his plan to gain our trust and destroy us once and for all!"

"You have a very overactive imagination, girlie," the Interceptor said. "I just want to get on with my life. You're nothing but a bunch of annoying kids."

"I think he's telling the truth," Simba told Nala. "I mean, it's been ages since we last saw him. Not since the Pride Lands were destroyed. I really think he was honestly trying to stay away and do his own thing."

"I don't believe this," Nala said, turning away and shaking her head. "What's next? Evil deals with Hago? Forming an alliance with Death? I mean, all he did was *kill* me! Maybe you two would be best friends!" She was really quite adamant about this. The only animals she really trusted were Simba, Haiba, Zazu and her mother. Even Ugaidi seemed like someone to keep your distance from…

"Nala, I think you have to face facts that the Interceptor isn't really much of a threat to us any more," Simba said. For some reason, he felt like he could… trust the Interceptor. It sounded crazy, but he was smart enough to know that something weird was going on around here… "If he wanted to kill us, then I think he would have had a pretty good opportunity to do it right now."

"Whatever," Nala scoffed, not convinced in the least. "You'll see—but by then you'll be dead. Good luck with that."

Simba turned his attention to the Interceptor. "Look, just tell us what's going on," he said. "Maybe then we can help."

"Shocker is after me," the Interceptor revealed. "He wants me dead."

Simba gasped at the Interceptor's explanation. *Shocker*. Of course he knew who Shocker was. One of the deadliest and most evil cubs to ever walk the earth. He wanted Simba, Nala and Haiba dead and buried six feet beneath the ground. It had taken all of their strength to beat him every time… and he just seemed to keep getting stronger and stronger. That was the problem with an immortal cub. He was practically unbeatable.

"Shocker?" Nala looked over her shoulder, her interest piqued. She couldn't help but listen whenever Shocker was brought up. He was a bad cub. One of the worst. She could remember how he had kidnapped her in order to try and kill Simba and Haiba… but he was much worse now—especially considering that he couldn't die. "Why are you talking about Shocker?"

"Oh, *now* she's interested," the Interceptor remarked. "I already said that he was coming after me. He wants revenge."

"But I thought you two were working together?" Simba presumed, having no knowledge of what had *really* happened between Shocker and the Interceptor during the devastation of the Pride Lands… "You were partners… right?"

"Uh… yeah," said the Interceptor slowly, glancing aside. "We were. But we sort of… fell upon stony ground."

"The betrayal," said Ugaidi, rocking back and forth from his hiding spot in the bushes. "The one who intercepts has betrayed the Shocker."

"Who the hell is that?" the Interceptor demanded, pointing at the insane cub. "Your own private hermit or something?"

"No, we've met hermits," Nala said quietly. "They usually have wings…"

"He's just a friend," Simba said hurriedly. "Now, tell me what happened between you and Shocker."

"He betrayed the Shocker," Ugaidi said, an intense glare in his eyes. "Tried to kill him. The immortal one. But you cannot kill what cannot die."

"I sort of… threw him into lava," the Interceptor explained. "When the Pride Lands were falling apart. I thought I finished him off for good. Clearly, I was wrong."

"You *threw him into lava*?" Nala exclaimed. "Was he really that bad of a partner?"

"I was sick of him!" the Interceptor protested. "Every single day the only thing he wanted to do was kill you! Now, I *like* a good hunt, but targeting the same three cubs over and over again just becomes monotonous. Surely you can understand that?"

"You're telling me," Nala said, thinking of all the times various villains had tried to kill them over the course of their lives. It was as if they were a magnet for trouble… "I've lost count of how many times we've had to save our own skins."

"How did he come back?" Simba asked. That was the part that confused him the most. "Especially if you threw him into lava. It should have completely destroyed every trace of his body."

"It doesn't matter," the Interceptor told him. "It took him a while, but he regrew his own body."

"That sounds painful," Nala said, almost wincing at the thought. Growing all of your organs and skin back. It sounded like true agony…

"Yeah, well, he wants me dead," the Interceptor said. "And I need your help to finish him off. Once and for all. There can't be any trace left of him. Then, when he's dead, I can leave you and your stupid pals alone. Do we have a deal?"

Don't mention the word 'deal', please, Simba thought. The word reminded him of his mind-shattering encounter with the King of Dreams… If he had the option to forget all about *that* fiasco, then he would. "Whatever—let's do it."

"*I like it!*" the Interceptor exclaimed, punching the air in triumph. "That's good. Excellent. Now, all we need is a fiendishly brilliant plan that will wipe that piece of filth off the face of the earth."

"So you don't have a plan, either?" Nala sighed, her shoulder sagging. "It seems that we always have to think for ourselves."

"Well, I don't know," Simba admitted, feeling ever so slightly stumped. "If lava won't kill Shocker, then what will? I can't think of any other better way to wipe out all traces of him. It's like no matter what happens, his body will just keep growing back."

"Maybe this is all part of his trap," said Nala suspiciously, narrowing her eyes. "I bet him and Shocker are working together so they can finally get rid of us. That's what you're doing, isn't it? *Isn't* it? Answer me!"

"You just don't give it a rest, do you?" the Interceptor said, shaking his head in bewilderment. "I'm going to knock her out in a minute."

"No," Simba replied. "We need to think up a plan together if we stand a chance of defeating Shocker. And I thought we'd finally seen the last of him…" He scowled. "Okay, so what would take him out for ever? There has to be something here that's more powerful than lava…"

Nala thought for a moment, before being hit by a brainstorm. "I've got it!" she proclaimed. "Water! If we knock him out somehow and stick him in a river, he'll just keep on drowning for all of time!"

"No, no," Simba said, as he shook his head. "That won't work. He'd be able to swim out or something like that. There has to be something else…"

"Ooh—I know!" the Interceptor exclaimed, as if it were the best idea he'd ever come up with. "We hit him with a rock!"

Simba and Nala just stared at him, dumbfounded that he would say such a stupid thing.

"Well, it would be a *big* rock," the Interceptor said sheepishly.

Simba sighed deeply. "If we're gonna come up with a decent way of killing Shocker, then we really need to—"

Zap!

A bolt of lightning struck the ground right in the middle of the trio, causing them to jump instinctively out of the way.

"*Yikes!*" Simba yelled, landing in a nearby bush.

A figure emerged from the entrance to Jowai Resort, his outline brimming with electricity. "*Interceptor! Show yourself!*"

"Oh, no!" Nala cried, pointing with a shaky claw. "It's Shocker!"

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: The Fury of Shocker

Chapter Four: The Fury of Shocker

"Don't think you can hide from me, Interceptor!" Shocker roared, glowing balls of electric energy completely covering his forepaws. "I know you're around here somewhere! Show yourself now or die!"

"You're going to kill me anyway," the Interceptor said through gritted teeth, as he dangled from a branch high up in the trees. "What difference does it make?"

"Shocker, what the heck do you think you're doing?" Simba demanded, stomping right over to the villainous cub. He neglected to mention that the Interceptor was hiding right above their heads… "Don't you ever learn when to just leave us alone?"

"Shut up, Simba," Shocker said, looking around the area but forgetting to check up in the trees. "My quarrel isn't with you this time. I want that spineless rat known as the Interceptor. You must have seen him. Now, *where is he*?"

"Interceptor?" Simba affected a look of mock thought for a moment. "Hmm… can't say I've seen him. Wait, I know—I'll ask Nala. Hey, Nala! You seen the Interceptor hanging around here?"

Nala caught on to the act, and shook her head as though she was completely stupid. "Oh, no. Haven't seen him anywhere. If he was running away from you, Shocker, then I'd say he was *miles* away. Maybe you should check the other side of the jungle or something."

"He knows not of the secret hiding up in the trees," said Ugaidi, immediately attracting Shocker's attention. "The one who intercepts is right above his nose."

"Huh?" Shocker looked straight upwards—

—as the Interceptor fell right on top of him. He was shrieking like an eagle—as he often did—and had his claws on the cub's throat. He laughed victoriously. "*I like it!* Now who's hunting who, hmm, Shocker?"

With an immense show of strength, Shocker kicked the Interceptor right into a nearby tree. His eyes immediately locked on to Simba and Nala. He pointed at them, the tips of his claws crackling with electricity. "*You*. You lied to me. You said he wasn't here."

"Uh…" Simba looked around nervously, before pointing at the Interceptor who was lying on the ground. "Oh, look—*there* he is!"

"Yeah!" Nala said, smiling. "Simba's found him for you!"

"I was going to leave you two alone," Shocker informed them, rearing up for another attack—but this time on Simba and Nala. "But thanks to your lying, you too will die as well. No one betrays Shocker and gets away with it!" He fired two blasts of lightning right at the two cubs.

"Look out!" Nala yelled, pushing Simba out of the way as they both darted from the fatal bolts. "I think he means business this time!"

"You're telling me," the Interceptor said, standing up to face Shocker. "Come on, Shocker! Show me what you've got, you coward!"

Shocker retaliated by sending two more bolts streaking right past the Interceptor, who easily dodged them.

"*I like it!*" he cried. "Come on! Is that all you got?"

Shocker growled at the top of his voice, firing a deadly flurry of electricity flying right at him. The Interceptor ducked low, pouncing at Shocker. The two collided, rolling across the ground as they attempted to finish each other off. "Come here, you little brat!"

The Interceptor slashed at Shocker's chest repeatedly; his first thought was to try and stop his powers for a limited time, but then he went further by cutting the cub's throat wide open. Shocker's eyes rolled into the back of his head and he died, blood pouring profusely from the deep wound.

"Yes! *I like it!*" the Interceptor exclaimed, stepping back from the cub's corpse. "That should stop him for a while."

Simba and Nala joined him at the scene, staring at Shocker's dead body.

"Well, that's *one* way to take care of him," Nala said. "Think we can keep his throat cut for ever?"

"No way," Simba replied. "He'll be back."

"But not yet," the Interceptor added. "That means we have time to make him *stay* dead." He looked up, and noticed something. "*What are you waving for, ya sausage?*"

Haiba was the one who was waving, looking incredibly confused. "Uh… hi. Guys, what's going on?"

"It's a long story," Nala told him. "But if you want the short version, then Shocker wants revenge on the Interceptor for killing him."

"Just another ordinary day, then," Haiba responded, walking over to them. He glanced at Shocker's corpse. "Ooh—that's a nasty cut, isn't it? He almost looks dead… Oh, wait. He *is*. Still… corpses have a certain element of cuteness to them."

"Haiba, stop admiring dead bodies," Nala said. "I respect your decision to have relationships with bushes and trees, but that's just too far."

"Can we stop talking about your love problems and focus on me for a minute?" the Interceptor butted in. "We have to decide what to do with his body. Something that'll make sure he *never* comes back."

"We could cut him in half," Haiba suggested. "Put the lower half on one side of the jungle, and the upper half on the other."

"That's just stupid," Simba said. "We need something that'll leave no trace of his body whatsoever."

"I think we have to face facts that nothing will kill him," Nala said, looking defeated. "If lava doesn't work, then *nothing* will."

"There has to be something," Simba said, walking around in circles as he quickly tried to formulate an idea.

"Well, we can think of it later," Haiba said worriedly, pointing at Shocker. "I think he's staring to wake up."

He was right. The long slit across Shocker's throat was beginning to seal itself back up again, blood returning to his body in the process. Before long, he would be back to fighting form again.

"I can just kill him again," the Interceptor said, reaching for Shocker's throat once more.

Zap! A blast of energy struck the Interceptor in the chest, sending him flying onto his back.

"Too late, Interceptor," Shocker said, rising to his paws, alive once more. "No one can kill me. I am always and forever."

"Right," Haiba said. "I think we'd better be going."

The three cubs sprinted away from Shocker as fast as they could. But he ignored them, focusing all of his attention on the Interceptor, who was slowly trying to steady himself. "I will obliterate you, Interceptor."

"Wait for me, you cowards!" the Interceptor yelled, running after the three cubs. "I'm not staying here with that psycho!" He ducked low as another bolt sailed over his head. Shocker just wouldn't stop, hurling blast after blast after blast at the Interceptor.

"I will destroy all of you!" Shocker declared. "Don't think I won't! Remember: *I have all the time in the world!*"

"Run, run, run!" Simba said. His legs were pounding the ground as he jumped over bushes and dodged trees.

"I think we're all pretty good at that!" the Interceptor retorted, looking back to see if Shocker was following them. He could still hear more blasts firing off in the distance, but the psychopathic cub was nowhere to be seen… yet.

"What are we going to do now?" Nala asked, eyes wide with fear. If Shocker caught them, there was no telling what he might do before killing them. She pictured their deaths to be long and torturous… Not a pleasant thought. "He won't stop until we're all dead!"

"And I thought today was going to be peaceful," Haiba panted as he ran alongside them. "Instead, I get dragged into

another one of these horrible adventures. Remind me never to speak to you two ever again."

"Seriously?" Nala asked.

"No," Haiba said, "but you know what I mean. I wish I'd stayed with Sarafina and Zazu!"

"Oh, what I'd give to have a peaceful life," Zazu moped as he heard the blasts firing all around him from his perch on a tree branch. "It's quite apparent that Simba, Nala and Haiba have gotten themselves into another deadly escapade."

"Zazu, do you ever stop complaining like an old bat?" Sarafina sighed, resting against the bottom of the tree. "Maybe it's just some animals having an argument."

"Who on earth would have an argument consisting of loud explosive noises?" Zazu retorted. "You're just being ridiculous."

"Hey! *You* two over there!" a voice sounded.

Zazu and Sarafina turned to see Shocker marching right towards them. His eyes were glowing with electrical fury.

"Who in the world is *that*?" Sarafina cried, staring at the cub in amazement.

"Not another murderous ruffian," Zazu moaned, close to having a mental breakdown. "I don't think I can take much more of this…"

"You two!" Shocker said, standing right in front of them now. "I presume you know Simba and his foolish friends, right?"

"Who says we do?" Sarafina said, giving the cub an angry stare. No matter how powerful—or strange—he was, she wasn't going to give anything away to him. She would stay defiant to the very end.

"I *know* you do. I see the lying look in your eyes. You must be Nala's mother." Shocker smirked. He looked up at Zazu. "And you must be King Mufasa's former royal advisor. I have to say that you really can't sink any lower."

"Leave him alone," Sarafina said. "Now, what do you want from us?"

"Your help," Shocker said. "I need to set up a trap, and I'm going to need some very useful bait." He raised his forepaws, ready to fire two deadly bolts at them if they tried anything sneaky. "Now, come with me—or die. The choice is yours."

Sarafina and Zazu looked at each other and gulped nervously.

AN: That dastardly Shocker has got something evil planned! It seems that even a maniac like the Interceptor is scared of him. Well, I'm going to leave you now with the promise that I'll update tomorrow. You be sure to come back here.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: Inside Shocker's Mind

AN: I always keep my promises. You can say now that I'm the most honest person alive. Or not. Here are the next two chapters.

Haradion: Acid is a good idea, but then where would they get it from? There has to be something else that'll take Shocker out for good.

anonymous13: I would never "pair the spares"! Although there is a fair bit of interaction between Zazu and Sarafina in these next couple of chapters...

Chapter Five: Inside Shocker's Mind

Sarafina had met some crazy animals in her life, but Shocker had to be the worst of them all. It seemed that all he liked to talk about was either destroying Simba, Nala and Haiba or someone called the Interceptor—whoever that was. How could one little—and heavily insane—cub hold so much hatred in his heart? He acted as though his life had lost all meaning. The only thing that mattered to him—the only thing he really cared about—was revenge.

And then what? What came after revenge? Sarafina didn't know. This Shocker villain liked to keep his thoughts safely locked up in his head. She had to admit, she wouldn't mind seeing some of the secrets he was hiding…

Although she didn't think there was much time for chitchat. Shocker was forcing her and Zazu along the jungle path, keeping them under secure watch. If they stepped so much as a toe out of line, then they would both be shocked to death in an instant. He would make sure there was nothing left of them…

Still, she had nothing left to do, so she decided to try and squeeze some information out of him—even if it was only a little bit. It was certainly a better option than marching forward like a mindless zombie and keeping her mouth shut.

"Just what is your plan, anyway?" Sarafina demanded, looking over her shoulder to see Shocker.

"Shut up," he snapped, giving her a hard shove from behind. Sarafina almost tripped, but managed to keep walking. "Just keep moving."

He's clever, Sarafina thought. *That's for sure.* She wondered if there was anyone who could make a connection with Shocker and discover why he was so depressed. Not to mention his reasoning for wanting to put Simba and the others out of business for all time. "I don't understand why you're so obsessed with killing my daughter and her friends. What did they do to hurt you?"

"Why do you care so much?" Shocker asked.

Bingo, Sarafina thought. At least she was getting somewhere now. "Well, for one, I've noticed that nothing else really matters to you. You seem fixated on murdering others. I don't understand it."

"It's not just them," Shocker said, frowning. It was as though he was remembering his past. "It's *everyone*. The whole world."

"What are you talking about?" Sarafina asked. "Surely the whole world can't hate you? That's just… a sad thing to say."

"What do you think you're doing?" Zazu hissed in her ear. He was stood on her back, terrified that saying the wrong thing would result in him being shocked to cinders. "I would strongly advise against aggravating this incredibly unstable cub."

"Shut your beak, Beaky," Shocker ordered.

"*Beaky*?" Zazu exclaimed in offence. "Well, I've never heard such a dreadful insult—" He shut his beak when Shocker sent an electrical bolt streaking past him. "Okay, okay! I'll shut up!"

"Good." Shocker stopped and turned to Sarafina, his head hung low. "All I've ever known is misery. Every time something good has happened, something ten times worse occurred as a result. It tore me apart. And then one day…" He raised a paw, watching it spark with electrical energy. "I received my powers. Finally, it felt like I use them to right everything that was wrong with the world. I could finally make things the way they should have been."

Sarafina stopped too, just listened intently, horrified—and strangely fascinated—by his story. It wasn't often that she had the opportunity to see inside the mind of a psychopath… "And what happened then?"

"I was *wrong*," Shocker said, as if disgusted by his extraordinary abilities. "Everything just got worse. The pain inside never stopped. I became immortal—and now I'll just keep on going. For ever and ever, plagued by misery." He stared into her eyes, and Sarafina could feel the full force of his fury burning into his soul. "*That's* why I'm so determined to kill them. It's all about showing them how I feel. *Especially* the Interceptor…"

"You won't win," Sarafina said courageously. "No matter how badly you feel on the inside inside, that gives you no right to hurt others. You're just as bad as any other maniac around this jungle."

"Don't you *dare* insult me," Shocker snarled, threateningly raising one of his sparking paws at her. "Or I'll make you very sorry indeed. You have no idea what a cub like me has to go through every single day. Killing myself in the most painful way imaginable just to see if I'll stay dead. And then, I have to watch my body excruciatingly repair itself for hours and hours and hours."

"If you want to die so much, then why are you still trying to kill everyone else?" Sarafina asked, unfazed by his threats. She didn't care whether he was going to kill her or not. In her opinion, you had to be brave until the very end…

"I want revenge before death," Shocker explained. "Once Simba, Nala, Haiba and the Interceptor are dead, I will personally make sure that I find a way to destroy my body for ever and ever. I want to die my own way, rather than being finished off by someone else. To me, that's the only *respectable* death one can have."

"Suicide?" Sarafina exclaimed. "You're crazy."

"I'm not crazy," Shocker responded. "I'm the smartest animal in this entire jungle. Now, keep moving—before I shock you so fast it'll make your head spin."

Sarafina scowled and did as she was told. She just hoped that Nala and the others had found somewhere decent to hide and come up with a plan, because Shocker was going to be far from a pushover…

"This isn't the time for sunbathing," said the Interceptor, frowning. "We're supposed to be coming up with a plan!"

Simba, Nala, Haiba and the Interceptor were stood at the edge of the desert, up to their ankles in sand as the boiling sunlight shone down on them. They hadn't returned to this perilous area since their quest to find the Hermit of Hekima—but desperate times called for desperate measures.

"We *are* going to come up with a plan," Simba said. "But if Shocker's going to come looking for us, then I doubt he'd come all the way out to the desert. He probably thinks we're much closer than that."

"Don't be so sure," the Interceptor retorted. "That little rat is up to something. I'm sure of it."

Haiba opened his mouth to speak, but Nala was quick to interrupt him. "No, Haiba—you're not kissing him."

"Oh, come on," Haiba protested. "You can't say it wouldn't be a 'shock'."

"Haiba, never say another awful pun for as long as you live," Simba said, before turning to Nala. "Look, I think we need to draw Shocker out, somehow. We need some kind of useful distraction if we're going to take him out for good."

"You're really getting into this 'kill or be killed' thing, aren't you?" Haiba asked, narrowing his eyes at Simba. "Someday, I think you might turn into a villain yourself."

"That's just silly," Nala said. "And besides, he's *right* about Shocker. We have to stop him for good—before it's too late. Otherwise think of all the horrible things he'll do if he catches us…"

"Oh, no," said Haiba, shuddering slightly. "I'm terrified just *thinking* about the torture. He might drive me mad by refusing to hug me. Ugh…"

"Was it really necessary to bring him along?" the Interceptor asked, jerking a claw in Haiba's direction. "All he talks is nonsense. We're supposed to be trying to destroy an immortal brat here."

"Okay, okay," Simba said, thinking for a moment. He looked to Nala. "Well, it's obvious that Shocker is going to go straight for your mother and Zazu."

"What?" Nala cried. "How'd you work that out?"

"Because they make good bait for a trap," Simba explained. "Come on—we've done the hostage thing hundreds of times

before. It's obvious that he's going to force them to be his damsels in distress."

"So that we'll have to go and rescue them?" Haiba presumed. "Well, I wouldn't mind saving either your mother *or* Zazu. They both have their attractive features…"

"I don't understand how we're supposed to capture Shocker if he's got a trap of his own," Nala told Simba, scratching the top of her head. "It's all very confusing. Are we hunting him or is he hunting *us*?"

"It's very simple," said Simba. "What we need to do is put a trap within the trap."

The Interceptor's expression fell flat at this. "A trap within a trap? That has to be the *stupidest* thing I've ever heard."

"Oh, really, Mr Let's-Throw-A-Rock-At-Him?" Nala retorted. "Because your previous ideas were just *brilliant*, weren't they? You know, I'm still not sure that you two aren't in cahoots together!"

"You calling me a liar?"

"I ain't calling you a truther!"

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Trap in a Trap

Chapter Six: Trap in a Trap

"Where are you taking us?" Zazu moaned, as Shocker led them up a steep grassy hill. It felt like they had been walking for miles, with no end in sight. Even if he *did* have some sort of evil plan in mind, it wasn't as though Simba and the others were going to come all the way out here to face him. Zazu thought they were far too lazy for that… "You have no idea how many aches and pains you've caused me."

"Zazu, you've been sitting on my back for the whole journey," Sarafina reminded him. "If anyone's aching around here, then it's me." She rolled her eyes at the hornbill, wondering how on earth he had become so dishonest. He never used to act like this when they were still living in the Pride Lands. Something horrible must have happened to him in the past…

"If that annoying bird doesn't cease speaking immediately, then I will turn him to ash," Shocker threatened. "Why do you allow such a miserable creature to accompany you, anyway? He's nothing but a burden."

"He's worth more than you," Sarafina told him, much to Zazu's surprise. He never expected her to stand up for him like that. "At least he doesn't want to kill innocent animals who haven't done anything."

"You're beginning to make me very mad," Shocker told her, his paws crackling for what seemed like the billionth time. "I can get very… *shocking* when I'm mad."

"Really?" Sarafina said, sounding very casual about his death threats. "I know you won't kill us. You *need* us for this pathetic plan of yours—whatever it is—and I know for a fact that it's going to fail miserably."

"Oh, really?" Shocker retorted. "Everyone is expendable. Even you and your dumb little companion. And my plan won't fail. I know exactly how Simba and his friends work. I can predict their every move. All I have to do is use you two as hostages and they'll come running straight to your rescue. That's when I'll strike." He kept on trudging up towards the top of the steep hill.

"I've never met someone so horrible," Zazu whispered in Sarafina's ear. "Well, aside from that Death character." It made him feel even more depressed to think of the circumstances surrounding his father's fate. All because of Death. It seemed that every tragedy in his life came down to a villainous maniac…

"Well, you haven't been all that chirpy yourself," Sarafina retorted. "I wish you'd tell us why you look so gloomy."

"It doesn't concern you," Zazu told her. "And it wouldn't matter, anyway. No one would care. No one ever pays any attention to me. I've always just been the little servant. The bird that follows every order without question. That's all I am."

"Don't talk about yourself like that," Sarafina said, shooting him a disapproving glare. "You're not worthless, Zazu. You never used to think like that."

"I learned quite recently that we all have a very tiny place on this earth," Zazu confessed. "It's about time that everyone else realised that, too. Ants. That's all we are. Tiny ants."

Sarafina sighed. "Just because someone's died doesn't mean you have to act like this," she told him.

"What makes you think someone's died?" Zazu asked, lifting his head. He wondered if Sarafina somehow had the ability to read minds. Magical powers weren't exactly impossible around these parts…

"I know how animals act when someone they love has died," Sarafina said. "I lost my mate a long time ago. From then on, it was just me and Nala. Now more than ever, since the Pride Lands were destroyed. I know how you feel."

"Her name was Pori," Zazu said sheepishly, finally telling someone for the first ever time. "She was killed by those… whatever they were before the kingdom was lost. I've never felt about anyone before like the way I did with her. When she died, it felt like… I didn't have anything to live for anymore."

"Death always makes everyone feel that way," Sarafina said. "But over time… we adapt to it. We learn how to carry on. I did. Someday, you will, too."

"I suppose that cheers me up," Zazu said. "Somewhat."

"Aha!" Shocker exclaimed, smiling as he reached the top of the hill. "This is *just* what I was looking for!"

Sarafina and Zazu finally reached the top of the hill, to discover a long patch of dry earth that ended with a very tall, rocky cliff.

"What on earth do you need *this* for?" Sarafina wondered, turning to Shocker. "It's just a cliff."

"The environment can be a very great ally," Shocker responded mysteriously. "Soon you'll understand."

"We need to let him catch us," Simba decided, much to the shock of everyone else.

"Are you insane?" the Interceptor exclaimed. "As soon as we're in sight, he's gonna zap us to death! *I don't like it!*"

"He won't do it straightaway," Simba told them. "He wants to make our deaths as slow and painful as possible. If anything, the only thing he'll try to do is knock us out. Then his 'fun' can begin."

"So how is letting him catch us going to stop him?" the Interceptor asked incredulously. "I'm beginning to regret asking you pussycats for help. I should just handle this myself." He began to storm away, only to be stopped by Simba.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" Simba said, stepping in front of the Interceptor. "Let's not be too hasty. You know that if you just go marching right up to him, then he'll shock you before you can do anything. Admit it, Interceptor: you *need* us."

"I'll show you who needs who in a second!" the Interceptor snarled, letting out another eagle shriek at him. "You're lucky I don't swallow you whole right now!"

"Does everything have to end in violence?" Simba asked. "Why can't we all just learn to love one another like decent animals?"

"Because the world of animals is built on violence and greed," Haiba replied. "We're born used to it."

"That's a bit deep, isn't it, Haiba?" Nala said.

"Yes, but my skin is so tight it's cut off the circulation to my head," Haiba responded. "Makes it very hard to focus."

"I think I'm losing my mind," the Interceptor groaned.

"Enough!" Simba yelled. "Look, the only way we're going to beat Shocker is if we make it look like he's won. We have to let him capture us—and *then* kill him when he least expects it."

"And what about making sure he *stays* dead?" Nala inquired. "That's pretty much the biggest problem we have right now. Or we could just… *not* kill him. Maybe if we give the Interceptor over to him, then he'll let us go."

"Isn't that just a little bit cruel?" Haiba asked, wondering how Nala could suggest something so… well, evil.

"Hey, don't look at me!" Nala replied, placing both forepaws on her chest. She pointed at the Interceptor. "He's the one who tried to kill us twenty-nine times!"

"It was four!"

"Whatever!"

Haiba suddenly noticed something, and sniffed the air. "I smell… smoke," he said. "Is something burning?"

Simba detected the smell, too. "I don't think something's burning."

Zap!

A blast of lightning struck Simba from the side, sending him flying right into the sand. "Nope. It's Shocker."

"Found you," Shocker said, smiling victoriously. "Did you honestly think you could hide from me? I said that I would find you."

"What do you want, Shocker?" Nala demanded. "We know that you've cooked up some kind of evil trap for us to fall right into."

"As a matter of fact, I *have*," Shocker admitted. "Your mother and Zazu are mere minutes away from death. Get to them before me, and they'll be perfectly safe. If not… then, well, you can use your imagination." He chuckled sinisterly.

"I'm not playing any more of your stupid games, Shocker," the Interceptor told him. "Why don't you come here and we'll settle this like proper lions, huh?" He screeched at him, brandishing his claws.

"I'm far more interested in the fun of taking you out than the deaths themselves," Shocker explained. "It's a good test of skill and strength, is it not?"

The Interceptor growled, pouncing at Shocker.

But in a flash of electricity, Shocker disappeared. The Interceptor collided with a nearby tree, falling flat on his back. "*I hate it!*"

"I really hate that guy," Haiba said, shaking his head. "Why does Shocker have to make everything so difficult? If he wants to kill us, then why doesn't he already?"

"It's all about mind games," Simba mumbled under his breath as he padded over to Haiba's side. "You should have seen me with the King of Dreams…"

"What?"

"Oh, nothing." Simba broke into a run, heading back towards the jungle. "Come on! We have to rescue Zazu and Nala's mother before it's too late!"

"No arguments from me," Nala said, following after him. "You coming, Haiba?"

"Do I have any other choice?" Haiba retorted.

"Wait for me!" the Interceptor cried. "Do what you want with his body, but his head is *mine*!"

AN: Looks like Zazu finally confessed to Sarafina about why he's been acting so moody lately. Not to mention Shocker's putting his deadly plan into motion. Can Simba, Nala, Haiba and the Interceptor finally figure out a way to stop him once and for all? Find out in the final chapter. If I'm feeling in a good mood, you might just get it tomorrow.

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Paying the Price

AN: Time for the exciting conclusion to the story! Will Shocker get away with his evil plot? Only time will tell...

Haradion: I would *never* mention Death for no reason whatsoever... or would I? I'm sneaky that way.

Chapter Seven: Paying the Price

"Where are you, Shocker?" Simba hissed through gritted teeth as he launched himself through the jungle, desperate to find him before he could hurt Sarafina or Zazu. When he *did* find Shocker, he was going to regret ever threatening them in the first place... He would make sure that there was nothing left of him.

"I think I see something up ahead," Haiba told him, his eyes focused on the sky as he ran alongside. "Look—I think it's a message!"

Simba and the others looked to the skies as they saw several deadly arcs of electricity shoot straight up into the air; clearly this was Shocker's way of letting him know where they were. It was what he wanted. To lead them straight into his deadly trap and finish them off—slowly and painfully—until there was nothing left of them. That was how he worked.

"A message for who?" Nala wondered, watching as the electricity continued to crackle and rage across the sky.

"Who do you think?" Simba retorted. "For *us*. It's all part of his plan."

"We just have to take him out," the Interceptor told them. "Never mind a stupid plan. As soon as I get within reaching distance, his head is mind. Then I'll make sure that he never comes back. I've had enough of him for a lifetime."

"Up here!" Simba said, skidding to a halt as he rounded a corner and began to clamber up a very steep and long hill. His paws slipped momentarily on the slightly damp grass, but he managed to regain his footing. "Come on—quick!"

"*I like it!*" the Interceptor cried, bounding up the hill in three quick jumps. When he reached the top, his expression showed total disbelief. "Oh, you have *got* to be kidding."

"What is it?" Simba asked, reaching the top of the hill and standing next to him. Nala and Haiba soon followed. "Oh, no."

Shocker was stood at the top of a tall cliff, smiling sinisterly. It looked as if he were some kind of all-powerful god looking down on his tiny subjects. "Nice to see that you could join us," he said to them all.

Simba and the others looked down to see Zazu and Sarafina stood directly at the bottom of the cliff, frozen to the spot. Their eyes weren't moving and neither were their mouths. They just stared straight ahead. Completely paralysed.

"What have you done to them, Shocker?" Nala demanded, glaring furiously at Shocker. "If you've in any way hurt my mother, I swear I'll—" She began to take a few steps forward, but Shocker interrupted her.

"Ahem," Shocker said, causing Nala to stop walking towards him. "I think that you may wish to take note of the fact that I've planted several dormant shock charges underneath the ground that will explode as soon as you step on them. There'll be nothing left of you."

"Why, you evil little..." Nala snarled, baring her teeth at him. "Just tell me what you've done to them."

"Is it not obvious?" Shocker replied, gesturing to Zazu and Sarafina below with his forepaws. "I've 'shocked' them. Shocked them so much that they have been totally stunned. Unable to move. They'll stay that way until I see fit."

He took sick pleasure from their angered reactions as he continued. "Of course, you can *try* to reach dear little Zazu and sweet Sarafina. Of course, you'll have to cross my deadly field of electricity if you wish to succeed. It's a challenge. You like those, don't you, Interceptor? Challenges?"

"What is this?" the Interceptor asked, fury burning in his eyes. "Trying to confuse the Interceptor? Ha-ha! It's a *joke*!"

"Of course, if you *do* somehow manage to rescue them, then you can always try to stop me as well," Shocker told them. "But how you're going to scale this cliff is a different matter entirely. If you think I'm going to tell you the answer, then I'm afraid you are mistake. So... what's it going to be, fools? Are you up to the challenge?"

"We'll stop you, Shocker," Simba said courageously. "And you know we will. You never win. You *can't*."

"Simba, I think you'll find that in this world, evil quite often prevails," Shocker told him. "Afraid so."

"Let's just get after him," the Interceptor said briefly, before charging forward into the dry expanse of dirt. He screeched. "*I like it!*"

"Oh, dear," said Shocker sarcastically, rolling his eyes. "That was a bad mistake."

A sudden burst of electricity shot up from the ground right in front of the Interceptor, causing him to fall onto his back in surprise. "What the—?"

"I did warn you," Shocker said. "I've practically rigged this entire part of the jungle with my powers." He laughed evilly at the top of his voice. "There's nothing you can do now! *At long last, revenge will be mine!*"

Simba growled angrily as Shocker continued to laugh loudly and obnoxiously. "We have to get to him before it's too late. The Interceptor's going to get himself killed out there."

"Who cares?" Nala shrugged. "I don't particularly care whether either of them die. All I care about is rescuing my mother and Zazu!"

"I think I may have an idea," Haiba said, raising a paw.

Nala looked as though she was at the end of her tether. "I swear to the Great Kings of the Past, if you suggest anything to do with *kissing* then—"

"No, no, no," Haiba interrupted, shaking his head. "I think I know how to set off his traps without us injuring ourselves."

"How, then?" Nala asked. "Because right now, things look pretty desperate!"

"Well, he can only put one trap in the same spot, right?" Haiba asked.

"I guess," Simba responded. "Why?"

"Well, what if we just set off the other traps by throwing rocks at the ground?" Haiba suggested. "Once all the traps are set off, we have a chance to confront him!"

"Hmm... that could actually work," Simba said, turning his head to look around on the hilltop. He noticed rocks scattered amongst the grass and plants in any random direction.

"Well, it's better than nothing," Nala said. "We might as well try it."

"Then we'd better hurry," Haiba said, moving swiftly across the hilltop.

The three cubs quickly began to gather up as many rocks as they possibly could, hurling them into the field of dry dirt. Some rocks that bounced and bumped across the ground did nothing—but then the others began to set off the traps. Blast after blast of electricity exploded from beneath the ground; this eventually caused a chain reaction that set off every single one of the traps. Eventually, the last of the electricity faded away, and Shocker's makeshift minefield was disabled.

The Interceptor was stood in the middle of the field, looking absolutely dumbfounded. "What the heck did you freaks do?"

"No! It's not possible!" Shocker snarled, growling with quiet anger as he watched the cubs strolling casually across the field. "It's just not possible!"

"We told you," Simba shouted up to him. "You never win."

Shocker couldn't take it any more, and exploded with rage. "*That's... it!*" he screamed, digging his claws into the ground as hard as he possibly could.

Immediately, Simba, Nala and Haiba watched as the cliff began to crackle with electricity. Before long, the entire thing collapsed, giving way into fragments of rock that were tumbling right towards the three cubs.

"*Run!*" Simba shouted, turning around and sprinting in the opposite direction as the huge boulders rained down on them all, rolling and bouncing across the ground. Nala and Haiba didn't need to be told; they practically leapt for the safety of the hilltop.

The Interceptor, however, wasn't afraid. He merely dodged and dived over the rocks, determined to finally get rid of his greatest enemy. "*Don't think that's gonna stop me, Shocker! I'm coming for you—and your head!*"

Shocker leapt for the ground, firing several blasts and bolts right at the Interceptor, who just about managed to evade them all. "Why won't you just *die?*" he yelled, trying to eliminate the sly villain to the best of his abilities. But the Interceptor just seemed too fast for him. How was he so agile?

The Interceptor pounced at Shocker, pinning him to the ground within seconds. His entire body was sparking with electricity—burning the Interceptor's body—but he didn't care. He just wanted him dead. For good.

With a final screech, the Interceptor dug his claws into Shocker's neck. "*I like it!*" he screamed—

—and tore Shocker's head right from his body.

Immediately, the sparks and spikes of electrical energy ceased and faded away, leaving only the faint trace and strong odour of smoke. Simba, Nala and Haiba wandered bewilderedly up to the Interceptor, who was covered with black scorch all over his fur.

"There," the Interceptor said, panting with exhaustion. "He's done for."

"Yeah..." Nala said, resisting the urge to vomit as she stared at Shocker's severed head. "I think that will make him stay dead for a while."

"We still need to make sure no one ever finds him," Simba reminded them. "And we need to trap him somewhere where he can't escape or come back to life."

The Interceptor stared at them all, a manic glint in his eyes. "I have an idea. Don't worry about it—I'll take care of him."

"You sure?" Simba asked, arching an eyebrow. "We don't want him coming back ever again."

"I'll take care of it," the Interceptor assured him.

"Fine," Simba said, turning around to see Nala and Haiba running over to Sarafina and Zazu. They had been released from Shocker's stun attack at last, most likely due to his death. But then Simba remembered something, and called after the Interceptor. "Hey! Wait a minute!"

"What?" the Interceptor asked, already making his way out.

"You don't know any wizards, do you?" Simba asked.

The Interceptor thought for a moment. "Ask that Tama girl," he replied, and then walked away.

Simba's face fell. "Gee, thanks."

The Interceptor left with Shocker's body, walking deep into the jungle. The journey seemed to take hours and hours, but at last he came to a stop in the middle of a long clearing that was filled with many grassy fields.

The Interceptor placed Shocker's body—and his head—on the ground, and then proceeded to tie his legs together with vines. Then he began to dig into the earth. He dug and dug and dug, until he had a fairly decent grave that would easily fit a cub.

He stood up once he had finished. He looked down at Shocker, watching as his dismembered head slowly began to reconnect itself to his body.

Once the head had firmly reattached itself to Shocker's body, his eyes snapped open and he gasped deeply for breath. He screamed in between gulps of air. "*What happened? What happened? What—?*"

The Interceptor grabbed Shocker by the throat. "Get in there!" he snarled, throwing him into the grave that he had dug. He landed hard in the dirt with a grunt.

"Interceptor!" Shocker snarled, lifting up his forepaws in an attempt to fire another blast at him, But only a few week sparks emitted from the tips of his claws. He stared down at them confusedly, and then realised that they were bound together with the vines. "What?"

"Powers a little weak after your recent death, huh?" the Interceptor asked. "You must have drained them out after that little stunt you pulled with the cliff. Not to mention I tied your legs together so you can't aim properly."

"My powers *never* run out!" Shocker declared.

"Whatever," said the Interceptor.

"Just what do you plan on doing?" Shocker asked. For once, he had a fearful look in his eyes.

For once, he was actually scared of the Interceptor.

"I want you to *suffer*," the Interceptor told him. "Once I fill this grave, you'll suffocate to death. Every time you wake up, the same thing will happen."

Shocker's eyes widened in horror as the full ramifications of the Interceptor's actions set in.

"And each time you come back, with a throat full of earth, I want you to think of me," the Interceptor said, staring hard into Shocker's eyes.

"No! You can't do this to me! You're the one who deserves to die first!"

The Interceptor ignored him, and proceeded to fill the grave, dirt piling on top of Shocker's face.

"No! No! *No!*"

Eventually the pleads became gags, and the gags became choking gasps, and the choking gasps eventually faded away into silence.

And all that could be heard was the chilling sound of the Interceptor's victorious laughter.

The End

AN: Ooh... that *is* quite chilling, isn't it? I think being buried alive and choking every time you come back to life is worse than lava. At least your body is only destroyed once. The Interceptor sure knows how to cook up a torturous eternal death sentence, doesn't he? Oh, well. At least Shocker is gone for good now. Or is he?

Actually, yeah. He is. We won't be seeing him again. Honest. See you next time!

NEXT TIME: Tojo becomes corrupted by the power of Hago's staff and creates his own new brand of mayhem...